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NEW MEXICO BUSINESS

CURRENT ECONOMIC REPORT

Vol. 9 No. 3
April 1988

Current Economic Developments in New Mexico

Various trends in the U.S. and international economy are likely to impact New Mexico. Based on real GNP, the U.S. economy was estimated to have grown by 1.7 percent during the first quarter, 1988. Compared to the year earlier, personal income for the first quarter, 1988 was estimated to be 6.7 percent higher. Retail sales gains during the first quarter were surprisingly strong with an annual rate of change of 4.4 percent. This compares to the 2.4 percent decline registered in the last quarter of 1987.

The rapid growth of foreign demand and U.S. capital spending are providing a real boost to the manufacturing sector. During 1988, Data Resources, Inc. (DRI) expects total U.S. production to increase by 3.8 percent. Electronics components production is forecast to increase by a particularly strong 8.7 percent during 1988.

Commodity prices important to New Mexico continue to be quite strong. Copper prices continue to remain above $1 per pound. U.S.-Iranian hostilities as well as speculation that non-OPEC oil producers may restrict output have temporarily increased crude oil prices; the West Texas Intermediate crude oil price (for May delivery) rose above $18.50 per barrel.

New Mexico's economy continues to underperform the U.S. economy. The state's recent weakness is illustrated by the slowdown in personal income growth (see personal income table). During both 1986 and 1987, New Mexico experienced weak income growth. However, the quarterly pattern for personal income does suggest an improving economy in the latter part of 1987. While personal income was only up 2.1 percent in the first quarter, by the last quarter of 1987 it was 5.4 percent higher compared to a year ago. Per capita personal income of $11,673 in 1987 for New Mexico represents a 2.1 percent gain over the previous year. U.S. per capita income increased by 4.8 percent during 1987. Based on the 1987 data, New Mexico now ranks 45th among the states in terms of per capita income (down from 41st in 1986).

New Mexico Personal Income

Year	Total ($ billions)	% Change (year ago)
1984	14.979	8.6
1985	16.267	8.6
1986	16.908	3.9
1987	17.510	3.6

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, April 1988.

The unemployment rate in New Mexico has been declining since the first quarter of 1987. The 8.0 percent rate for the fourth quarter, 1987 was the lowest since the last quarter of 1984. The slow growth of the labor force is primarily responsible for the drop in the state's unemployment rate.

After averaging only 0.3 percent growth in 1987, nonagricultural employment growth seems to be picking up slightly in early 1988. The 1.8 percent gain for February 1988 (compared to February 1987) was due in part to recent gains in the manufacturing, mining and retail trade sectors.

The most surprising sector in terms of job gains would have to be retail trade. The February 1988 employment data suggests a rather vibrant sector with job gains of 3.5 percent for the state, 7.2 percent for the Las Cruces MSA, 6.1 percent for the Albuquerque MSA and 7.8 percent for the Santa Fe MSA. Retail job growth in the state during 1987 was only 1.6 percent.

Manufacturing and mining both have recently provided a boost to New Mexico's economy. Employment in manufacturing was up 2.7 percent in 1987. Increased production of transportation equipment was primarily responsible for the growth in the number of manufacturing jobs. Transportation Manufacturing Corp. (TMC) of Roswell added about 500 employees during 1987. Preliminary data suggests manufacturing employment is at least 7 percent above last year's level for the first few months of 1988. This is remarkably strong growth considering the number of manufacturing jobs for the entire U.S. economy was estimated to be only 2.3 percent higher during the first quarter, 1988.

Higher prices stimulated a mild recovery in the oil and gas sectors during the last half of 1987. Employment in oil and gas extraction was estimated by the New Mexico Department of Labor to be 9,100 in February 1988, up 800 jobs from February 1987. Both oil and gas well completions were up significantly during the fourth quarter of 1987 and the first quarter of 1988 (compared to year ago activity). Natural gas production is up significantly from a year ago while oil production of about 18.3 million barrels during the fourth quarter, 1987 was about the same as the year ago level.

Metal mining employment (primarily in the copper industry) has remained at about 2,100 in early 1988. Copper prices near $1 per pound have clearly benefited this sector. Although 1987

(Continued on Page 7)

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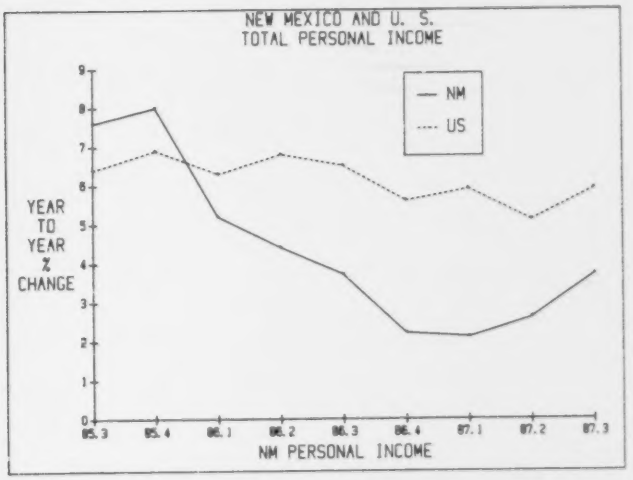
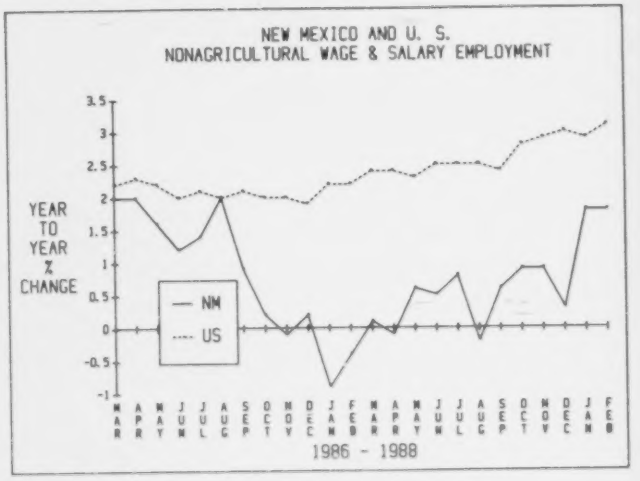
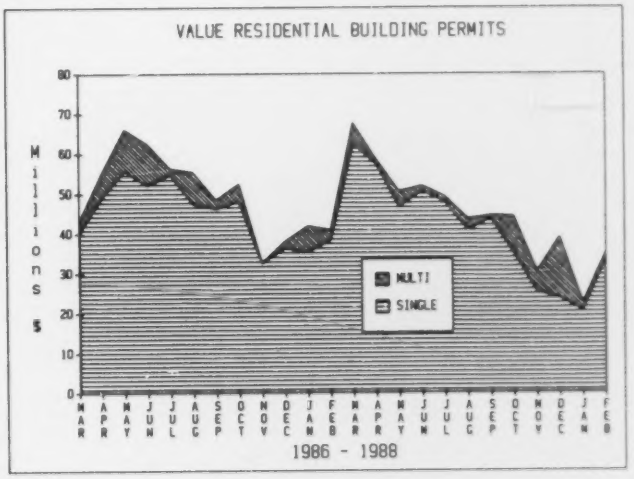
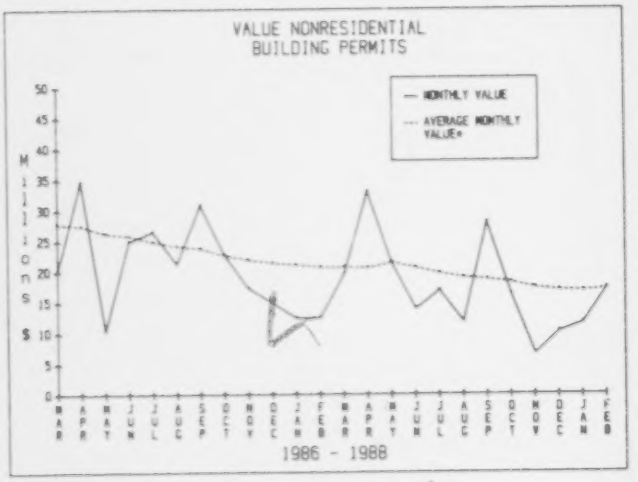
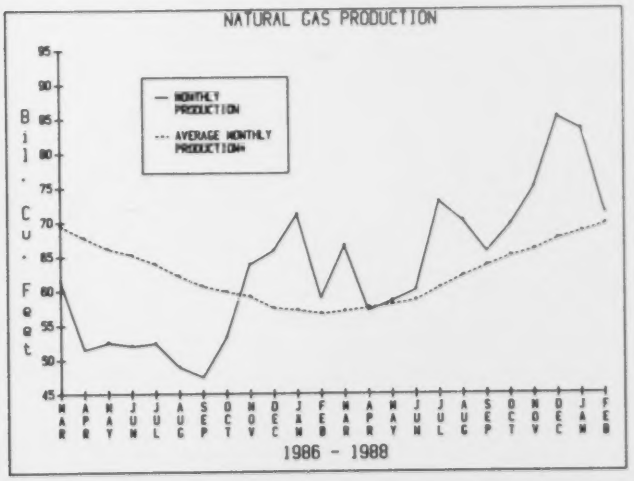
ECONOMIC TRENDS IN NEW MEXICO

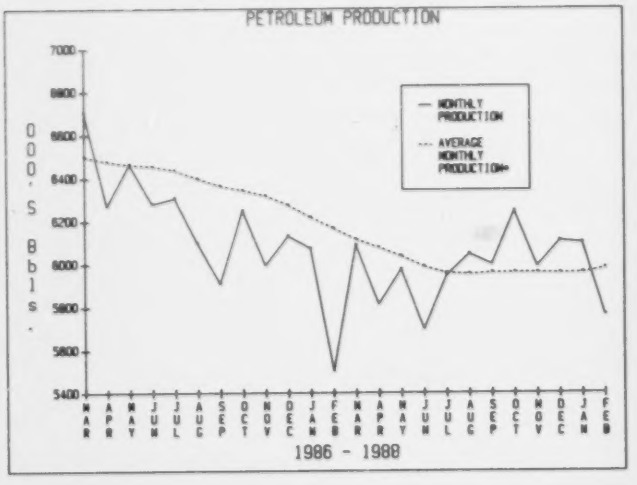












*12 month moving average. For example, the point for August, 1986 represents an average of data from September, 1985 through August, 1986.

U.S. ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	CURRENT MO/QTR	CURRENT DATA	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	PREVIOUS MO/ QTR DATA
Consumer price index				
All urban consumers (1982-84=100)				
All items	Feb 88	116.0	3.9	115.7
Food and beverages	Feb 88	115.8	2.9	115.7
Housing	Feb 88	116.6	3.7	116.2
Apparel and upkeep	Feb 88	110.2	3.8	110.4
Transportation	Feb 88	106.8	3.6	107.1
Medical care	Feb 88	135.5	6.4	134.4
Entertainment	Feb 88	118.3	4.2	118.1
Other goods and services	Feb 88	134.2	6.4	133.4
Revised series, wage earners and clerical workers (1982-84=100)				
All items	Feb 88	114.7	3.8	114.5
Gross national product* ($Bil. constant)	IV 87	3877.9	4.0	3835.9
Prime interest rate** (% per annum)	Feb 88	8.5	13.4	8.8
Mortgage interest rate*** (% per annum)	Jan 88	9.1	-3.9	9.1
3 month treasury bill# (% per annum)	Feb 88	5.7	1.8	5.9
Industrial production## (1977=100)	Jan 88	133.8	6.1	133.6
Manufacturers new orders## ($Bil.)	Jan 88	212.6	13.4	213.8

NEW MEXICO AND U.S. COMPARISONS

		NEW MEXICO			UNITED STATES		
	CURRENT MO/QTR	CURRENT MO/QTR DATA	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	PREVIOUS MO/QTR DATA	CURRENT MO/QTR DATA	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	PREVIOUS MO/QTR DATA
Employment (000)	Feb 88	620.1	1.5	615.7	112,460	2.8	112,139
Unemployment rate (%)	Feb 88	8.6	-13.1	8.9	6.2	-13.8	6.3
Nonagricultural employment (000)	Feb 88	528.2	1.8	525.8	102,924	3.2	102,348
Personal income### ($Mil.)	III 87	17,568	3.8	17,359	3,757,699	6.0	3,705,166
Housing units permitted							
Single	Feb 88	485	-11.9	299	62,557	-9.2	50,065
Multi	Feb 88	27	-69.6	74	29,818	-5.4	20,372

Note: Selected data items subject to revision.
N Not available.
* 1982 dollars at seasonally adjusted annual rates.
** Closing rate for month.
*** Effective rate (in the primary market) on conventional mortgages, reflecting fees and charges as well as contract rate and assumed, on the average, repayment at end of 10 years.
# Rate on new issues within period; bank discount basis.
Monthly data seasonally adjusted.
Quarterly data seasonally adjusted at annual rates.
Sources: U. S. Department of Labor, News: CPI data;
New Mexico Department of Labor and U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: employment and unemployment data.
U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis: income data;
U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: construction data.
U. S. Council of Economic Advisors, Economic Indicators: all other data.

NEW MEXICO ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	CURRENT MO/QTR	CURRENT DATA	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	PREVIOUS MO/QTR DATA	% CHANGE# 12 MONTH AVERAGES
1. GENERAL					
Civilian labor force* (000)	Feb 88	678.5	0.0	675.9	0.5
Total employment* (000)	Feb 88	620.1	1.5	615.7	1.2
Unemployment* (000)	Feb 88	58.4	-13.0	60.2	-6.0
Unemployment rate (%)	Feb 88	8.6	-13.1	8.9	-6.4
Weekly new unemployment insurance claims	Feb 88	1503.0	-6.8	1668.0	-21.6
Nonagricultural wage/salary employment**(000)	Feb [illegible]	528.2	1.8	525.8	0.7
New business incorporations	Dec 87	233.0	-21.0	198.0	-2.4
Personal income*** ($ mil.)	III 87	17568.0	3.8	17359.0	2.7
2. AGRICULTURAL RECEIPTS					
Livestock and products ($ mil.)	Dec 87	62.3	57.4	84.8	13.4
Crops ($ mil.)	Dec 87	29.4	-5.7	42.8	-0.5
Total ($ mil.)	Dec 87	91.7	29.6	127.5	9.2
3. MINING					
Employment** (000)	Feb 88	15.4	7.0	15.5	-1.9
Average hourly earnings ($)	Feb 88	12.00	-2.5	12.04	-6.3
Petroleum production (000 bbls.)	Feb 88	5759.0	4.7	6095.7	-3.0
Natural gas production (bil. cu. ft.)	Feb 88	71.2	20.9	83.3	23.0
Coal production (000 short tons)	Feb 88	1733.0	14.5	1819.0	-10.8
Oil well completions&	Feb 88	56.0	47.4	63.0	6.8
Gas well completions&	Feb 88	23.0	9.6	46.0	24.4
Total footage drilled&& (000)	Feb 88	421.8	22.2	688.3	3.7
Oil sales ($ mil.)	Dec 87	99.6	23.0	99.4	15.8
Gas sales ($ mil.)	Dec 87	150.0	57.1	107.9	-1.6
4. CONSTRUCTION					
Employment** (000)	Feb 88	27.8	-7.3	28.3	-9.5
Average hourly earnings ($)	Feb 88	11.00	2.8	10.97	-0.8
Residential units permitted	Feb 88	512.0	-19.9	373.0	-17.4
Residential building permits ($ mil.)	Feb 88	34.9	-14.8	22.6	-9.3
Nonresidential building permits ($ mil.)	Feb 88	17.2	37.6	11.6	-17.0
Residential construction contracts ($ mil.)	Feb 88	39.8	-14.4	28.9	-14.7
Nonresidential construction contracts ($mil.)	Feb 88	56.1	50.0	41.6	0.3
Nonbuilding construction contracts ($ mil.)	Feb 88	9.3	-34.9	6.2	3.6
5. TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATION/UTILITIES					
Employment** (000)	Feb 88	28.7	0.8	28.6	-1.7
Average hourly earnings## ($)	Feb 88	14.91	10.0	15.00	11.3
6. MANUFACTURING					
Employment** (000)	Feb 88	39.1	7.5	39.1	3.8
Average hourly earnings ($)	Feb 88	8.77	1.9	8.91	0.4
Electric & electronic equipment employment** (000)	Feb 88	5.3	12.8	5.2	4.2
Transportation equipment employment** (000)	Feb 88	5.2	26.9	5.2	19.6
Food & kindred products employment** (000)	Feb 88	3.5	-7.8	3.6	-2.3
Textile & apparel employment** (000)	Feb 88	2.6	8.4	2.6	8.4
Lumber & wood products employment** (000)	Feb 88	2.5	0.0	2.5	-3.7

NEW MEXICO ECONOMIC INDICATORS (continued)

	CURRENT MO/QTR	CURRENT DATA	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	PREVIOUS MO/QTR DATA	% CHANGE# 12 MONTH AVERAGES
7. TRADE					
Wholesale employment** (000)	Feb 88	22.7	2.3	22.7	0.9
Retail employment** (000)	Feb 88	103.9	3.5	104.5	2.2
Average hourly earnings ($)	Feb 88	6.66	-3.0	6.76	0.4
8. FINANCE/INSURANCE/REAL ESTATE					
Employment** (000)	Feb 88	27.1	2.3	27.1	2.3
Bank average hourly earnings ($)	Feb 88	6.06	1.4	6.15	3.3
Bank total assets ($ mil.)	III 87	9430.4	-0.8	9578.7	1.9
Bank total deposits ($mil.)	III 87	8092.7	-1.5	8212.0	1.6
Bank gross loans ($ mil.)	III 87	5671.0	2.4	5663.6	1.2
S & L total assets ($ mil.)	Jan 88	6067.0	7.3	6033.0	12.4
S & L total deposits ($ mil.)	Jan 88	4697.0	3.9	4645.0	5.9
S & L new mortgage loans closed&&& ($ mil.)	Jan 88	62.0	-44.5	70.0	-19.3
9. SERVICES AND TOURISM					
Total service employment** (000)	Feb 88	122.7	1.9	121.6	2.6
Lodging employment** (000)	Feb 88	10.7	-0.9	10.8	0.9
Eating & drinking places employment** (000)	Feb 88	38.8	6.9	38.6	5.6
Visits to state parks (000)	Dec 87	129.3	-36.2	233.4	-8.6
Visits to national parks/monuments (000)	Feb 88	76.2	5.2	56.9	-1.8
Passenger traffic at Albuquerque airport@ (000)	Feb 88	287.1	-1.9	285.6	3.0
Lodgers tax receipts ($ 000)	IV 87	2284.8	27.5	2611.5	16.2
Lodging occupancy rates (%)	Feb 88	49.2	-1.4	44.8	4.0
10. GOVERNMENT					
Total government employment** (000)	Feb 88	140.8	0.5	138.4	0.0
Federal employment** (000)	Feb 88	29.3	-2.9	29.4	0.7
State employment** @@ (000)	Feb 88	49.9	-1.1	48.0	-4.1
Local employment** (000)	Feb 88	61.6	3.6	61.0	3.5
Total general fund revenues@@@ ($ mil.)	Jan 88	117.8	13.5	119.4	2.2

Note: selected data items subject to revision.
N Not available.
* Number of persons by place of residence.
** Number of jobs by place of work.
*** Quarterly data seasonally adjusted at annual rates.
& These include wells that are in the following categories: new drillings, deepened, plugged back, reentry and additional zone.
&& Oil and gas combined.
&&& New mortgage loans closed equals the previously carried item "Total loans closed" plus a relatively insignificant additional loan category.
# For example, in the report that contained June 1985 figures this would be the percent change in the average of July 1983 to June 1984 data versus the average of July 1984 to June 1985 data.
Communications and utilities only.
@ Passenger traffic includes enplanements and deplanements.
@@ This figure includes full and part time employment at Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL). Full time employment alone at LANL is 7,955 as of AUGUST 1986 according to U. S. Dept. of Energy, Public Affairs.
@@@ Includes recurring and non-recurring revenues.

Sources: New Mexico Department of Labor: Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10;
Dun and Bradstreet, Inc.: Section 1;
U. S. Dept of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis: Section 1;
USDA Statistical Reporting Service: Section 2;
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Dept., Oil and Gas Conservation Division: Section 3;
New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Dept., Oil and Gas Accounting Division: Section 3;
U. S. Dept. of Energy, Energy Information Administration: Section 3;
U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: Section 4;
F. W. Dodge Company (a division of McGraw Hill, Inc.): Section 4;
U. S. Federal Reserve: Section 8;
Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas: Section 8;
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Dept., Park and Recreation Division: Section 9;
U. S. National Park Service: Section 9;
City of Albuquerque, Albuquerque International Airport: Section 9;
New Mexico Dept. of Finance and Administration, Local Government Division: Section 9;
Parnell, Kerr and Forster: Section 9;
New Mexico Dept. of Finance and Administration: Section 10.

CITIES, COUNTIES AND FEATURES

GROSS RECEIPTS# FROM RETAIL TRADE##
TOP 20 CITIES
($000)

	CURRENT 3 MONTH AVERAGE* DEC-FEB	% CHANGE AVERAGE YEAR AGO	PREVIOUS 3 MONTH AVERAGE* SEP-NOV
Alamogordo	$ 15,731	10.5	$ 15,186
Albuquerque	245,484	1.4	223,928
Artesia	5,213	3.4	4,543
Carlsbad	12,644	-9.1	10,764
Clovis	16,981	0.8	15,917
Deming	5,610	13.3	4,840
Espanola	7,381	5.5	7,316
Farmington	30,924	11.6	27,726
Gallup	22,347	4.2	22,068
Hobbs	16,764	5.9	15,744
Las Cruces	36,845	2.5	34,661
Las Vegas	6,117	3.6	5,878
Los Alamos	6,070	1.4	5,531
Portales	5,010	-25.7	5,144
Rio Rancho	4,870	29.6	4,351
Roswell	19,359	-0.5	17,791
Ruidoso	5,620	8.2	5,784
Santa Fe	51,144	9.7	53,983
Silver City	8,163	9.2	8,088
Taos	7,773	22.8	7,761
State total	669,059	6.1	634,607

\# Gross receipts reported are for gross receipts tax purposes, which do not include all the receipts of all firms.
\#\# Estimates for May, 1987 based on incomplete data.
* Averages are used to smooth out fluctuations in the data, which are not caused by changes in economic conditions.
Note: Rio Rancho now replaces Grants in the top 20 cities.

Source: New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department.

NEW MEXICO CONSTRUCTION
SELECTED CITIES

	NUMBER OF BUILDING UNITS OR PERMITS *				VALUE OF BUILDING PERMITS ($000)			
	FEB. 1988	FEB. 1987	CUMULATIVE TOTAL THROUGH FEB. 1988	CUMULATIVE TOTAL THROUGH FEB. 1987	FEB. 1988	FEB. 1987	CUMULATIVE TOTAL THROUGH FEB. 1988	CUMULATIVE TOTAL THROUGH FEB. 1987
NEW RESIDENTIAL**								
Alamogordo	6	21	13	46	$ 228	$ 1,038	$ 559	$ 2,101
Albuquerque	203	255	319	563	14,753	16,676	23,352	31,112
Carlsbad	3	12	9	15	153	674	419	815
Clovis	4	6	5	15	288	618	388	1,110
Farmington	5	4	9	12	234	163	516	610
Hobbs	0	4	0	4	0	317	0	317
Las Cruces	31	77	80	277	1,589	3,750	4,164	8,903
Los Alamos	3	5	4	12	506	289	696	2,589
Rio Rancho***	77	118	116	220	3,392	6,789	5,121	12,966
Roswell	7	8	11	12	415	506	685	712
Ruidoso	4	1	5	2	206	61	286	127
Santa Fe	16	17	31	29	1,342	1,246	2,171	2,176
NEW NONRESIDENTIALr								
Alamogordo	7	6	10	8	156	141	166	155
Albuquerque	5	3	12	17	9,549	5,029	15,397	12,344
Carlsbad	0	3	1	3	0	13	1	13
Clovis	2	1	3	7	43	22	635	364
Farmington	1	1	2	3	25	70	41	277
Hobbs	0	2	2	2	0	52	275	52
Las Cruces	10	10	21	24	733	1,487	1,456	1,750
Los Alamos	1	2	1	2	10	6	10	6
Rio Rancho***	2	2	2	5	1,950	23	1,950	508
Roswell	1	5	2	9	1	5	201	15
Ruidoso	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	32
Santa Fe	4	1	4	5	182	750	182	1,465

Note: Top twelve cities chosen on basis of residential construction activity during the period 1982 through 1984.
r 1985 data is revised.
* Residential data shows the number of permitted units, while nonresidential data shows the number of permits.
** Residential data includes both single and multi family units.
*** City of Rio Rancho reported Rio Rancho data.

Sources: City of Rio Rancho: Rio Rancho only;
U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census: all others.

CITIES, COUNTIES AND FEATURES (continued)

ESTIMATED CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT
(000)

	NEW MEXICO			ALBUQUERQUE MSA*			LAS CRUCES MSA**			SANTA FE MSA***		
	FEB. p	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	JAN. r	FEB. p	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	JAN. r	FEB. p	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	JAN. r	FEB. p	% CHANGE YEAR AGO	JAN. r
TOTAL CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	678.5	0.0	675.9	259.0	-0.2	256.6	54.0	0.8	54.4	65.0	3.2	64.9
Employment@	620.1	1.5	615.7	243.0	0.0	240.2	50.1	0.9	50.2	61.1	3.8	60.9
Unemployment	58.4	-13.0	60.2	16.0	-4.1	16.4	4.0	2.6	4.2	3.9	-4.8	4.0
Unemployment rate (%)	8.6	-13.1	8.9	6.2	-3.1	6.4	7.3	0.0	7.6	6.0	-7.6	6.1
NONAGRICULTURAL WAGE & SALARY EMPLOYMENT	528.2	1.8	525.8	231.4	2.0	230.6	40.6	0.5	40.6	54.0	3.7	53.7
Mining	15.4	7.0	15.5	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Contract construction	27.8	-7.3	28.3	14.4	-6.4	14.6	2.0	-4.7	2.0	2.2	-4.3	2.2
Manufacturing	39.1	7.5	39.1	20.3	3.1	20.2	3.9	5.5	4.1	1.7	6.3	1.7
Durable goods	26.8	11.3	26.7	14.8	3.5	14.7	1.6	0.0	1.7	1.1	10.0	1.1
Nondurable goods	12.3	0.0	12.4	5.5	1.9	5.5	2.3	9.6	2.4	0.6	0.0	0.6
Transportation & public utilities	28.7	0.8	28.6	12.4	2.5	12.4	1.3	-13.3	1.4	1.2	9.1	1.2
Trade	126.6	3.3	127.2	60.0	4.9	60.3	8.4	7.7	8.5	10.5	7.2	10.7
Wholesale	22.7	2.3	22.7	14.1	1.5	14.1	0.9	12.5	0.9	0.8	0.0	0.8
Retail	103.9	3.5	104.5	45.9	6.1	46.2	7.5	7.2	7.6	9.7	7.8	9.9
Finance, insurance, & real estate	27.1	2.3	27.1	14.6	2.1	14.7	1.6	0.0	1.7	1.9	-4.9	2.0
Services	122.7	1.9	121.6	64.1	2.0	63.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	14.3	6.0	14.1
Government	140.8	0.5	138.4	45.4	0.7	44.6	16.8	-4.5	16.5	22.2	1.9	21.8
Federal	29.3	-2.9	29.4	13.1	-1.5	13.0	4.2	-6.6	4.2	1.5	0.0	1.5
State	49.9	-1.1	48.0	11.7	-4.8	11.2	7.1	-10.1	6.8	16.6	1.9	16.4
Local	61.6	3.6	61.0	20.6	5.7	20.4	5.5	5.8	5.5	4.1	2.5	3.9

N Not available, less than 50 jobs.
p Preliminary.
r Revised.

* Bernalillo County.
** Dona Ana County.
*** Santa Fe and Los Alamos Counties.
@ Includes labor disputes.

Source: New Mexico Department of Labor.

Current Economic Developments

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copper production figures have not been released yet, overall state production is likely to exceed the 302 thousand short tons produced during 1986.

Total government employment in the state was estimated to be 140,800 during February 1988. Local government employment was up 3.5 percent in the state, reflecting a greater number of teachers and aides at the elementary level. Federal and state government employment were both estimated to be slightly lower in February relative to a year ago. Overall, the state's most important employment sector, total government, has seen only a 0.4 percent increase in jobs over the last year.

New Mexico's other large employment sector, services, has also slowed considerably over the last few quarters. Overall, this sector saw a gain of 3.0 percent net new jobs during 1987. However, by the fourth quarter, 1987, this rate of growth had declined to 1.5 percent. Preliminary data for early 1988 suggest services employment gains continue to be below 2 percent. While Albuquerque's job gains in services in early 1988 appear to be close to the state's average, the two other metropolitan areas have recently seen job growth in excess of 6 percent. Las Cruces' gain in service employment is likely related to SDI and other research activity at White Sands Missile Range as well as the recent strength of the agricultural sector, particularly livestock production.

Employment in the state's smaller sectors, transportation, communications and utilities (TCU) and finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) changed only moderately during 1987. In early 1988, preliminary data suggest that TCU employment has remained unchanged in the state. The Albuquerque area, on the other hand, saw the number of jobs in the TCU sector increase 2.5 percent in February 1988 compared to the same month in 1987.

The minimal gain in FIRE employment in the state (up 1.9 percent during 1987) was undoubtedly related to the slowdown in personal income growth in the state. In early 1988, FIRE employment in both the state and the Albuquerque area was about 2 percent higher than this sector's employment in early 1987.

Information available for the first two months in 1988 suggests continuing weakness in the construction sector. As reported by F. W. Dodge, the value of all construction contracts in New Mexico has fallen by 17.6 percent. Nonresidential building construction, which includes commercial, manufacturing and some public buildings, actually was up 42 percent in the first two months of 1988 relative to the same period in

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1987. However, the gain was not strong enough to offset the steep decline in the much larger components of construction activity, residential and nonbuilding. Similar trends have also been occurring in the Albuquerque area. Overall, the value of new contracts is down about 8 percent in Bernalillo County. For Santa Fe, Sandoval and Dona Ana counties, construction contract values in early 1988 were also down sharply. New Mexico's construction employment was about 7 percent lower in early 1988 compared to early 1987.

David Boldt, Economist

NOW AVAILABLE

New Mexico Jobs for Graduates is a new publication just released by the New Mexico State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NMSOICC). This report presents valuable information for the college or vocational-technical school graduate.

Included in the publication are the results of a hiring needs survey conducted by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research for NMSOICC in early 1988. This survey of 161 of New Mexico's largest employers shows various occupations the companies are hiring for, along with the number of expected openings, starting salary ranges and desired education levels. Additionally, each company's preferred grade point minimums, experience requirements, normal recruitment period and personnel office addresses are shown. Also included is a general New Mexico economic outlook, as well as long-term national and state job outlooks. For more information about this free publication call the Data Bank at 277-6626.

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Subscription Price $15.00 per year.
Single Copies $1.85